

DOWN ^{at} the FARM

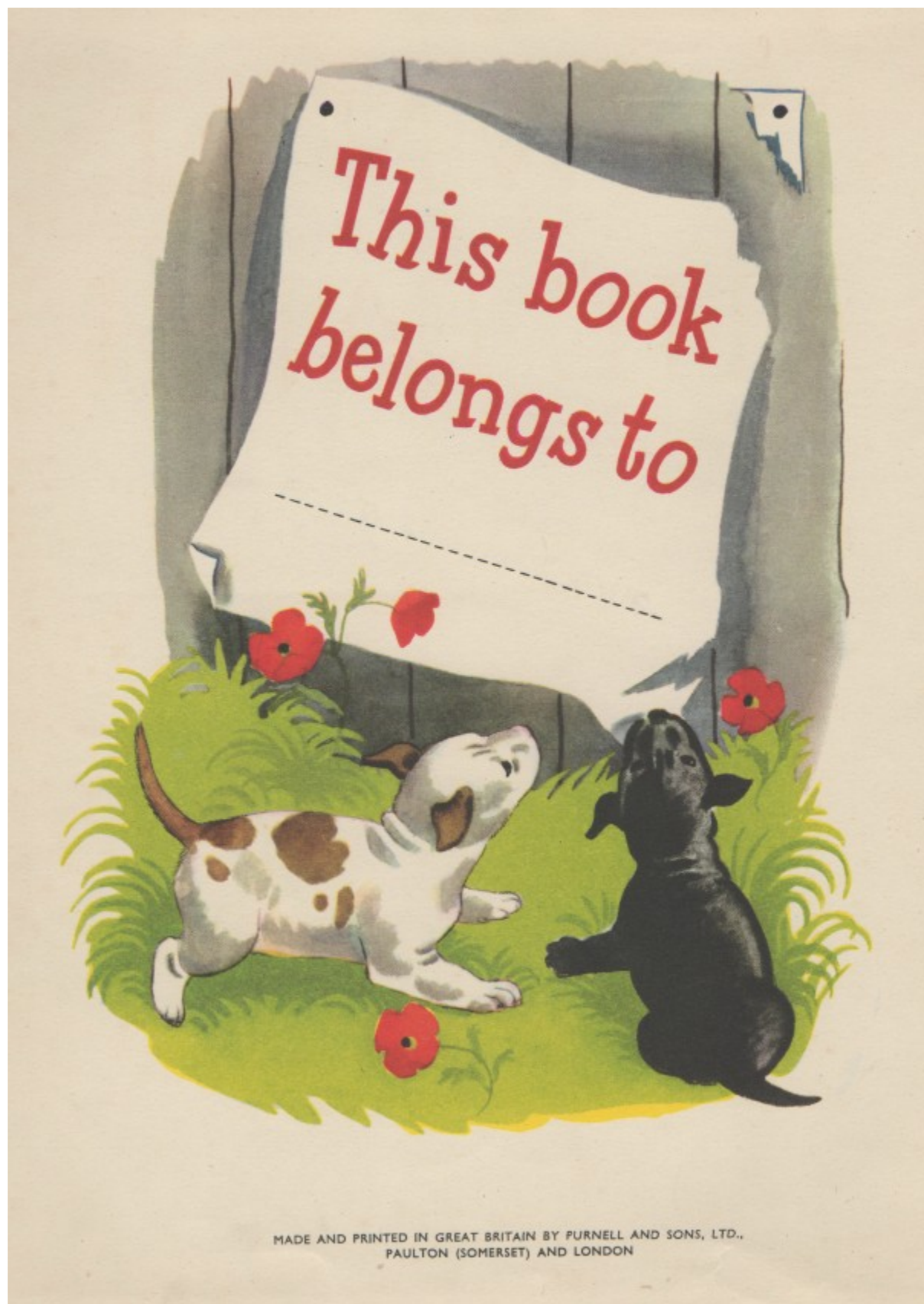
with Enid Blyton



Illustrations by **CICELY STEED**







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DOWN AT THE FARM

WITH

Enid Blyton



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BOBBY had been ill in bed. Now he was up and about, but his legs still felt rather wobbly.

'You must send Bobby away to the country,' said the doctor to Bobby's mother. 'Do you know anyone who has a farm? That's the sort of place he should go to.'

'Well—my sister lives on a farm,' said Bobby's mother. 'She lives there with her husband and two children. I'll ask her if she will have Bobby for a little while.'

'Oh, Mummy—I don't want to go,' said Bobby. 'I'm sure I shouldn't like being on a farm—why, I'm afraid of cows, and there are sure to be great big horses that might trample on me.'

'All the more reason for you to go if that's the kind of silly ideas you have!' said the doctor. 'My word—once you get down to the farm you won't want to come back here to a town.'

Well, after a little while it was all arranged. Mummy was to take Bobby down to the farm where his two cousins, Peter and Jenny, lived. She was to leave him there, and he was to get quite well again.

So here they are, going down in the bus to Apple-Tree Farm. What a long way it seemed! 'I didn't know the world was so big!' said Bobby, when the bus came to the top of a hill, and the little

boy looked down on hundreds of green fields stretching as far as he could see.

"Now, when the bus turns the next corner, you will see Apple-Tree Farm," said Mummy. "Look out for it. It is such a pretty place. The apple trees will be out in the orchard. That's why the farm is called Apple-Tree Farm, of course."

The bus swung round the corner. Bobby looked out of the window. Where was Apple-Tree Farm?

There it was, nestling down in the little valley, with apple trees blossoming pink all round. The farmhouse was made of old red brick, and its roof was thatched with straw.

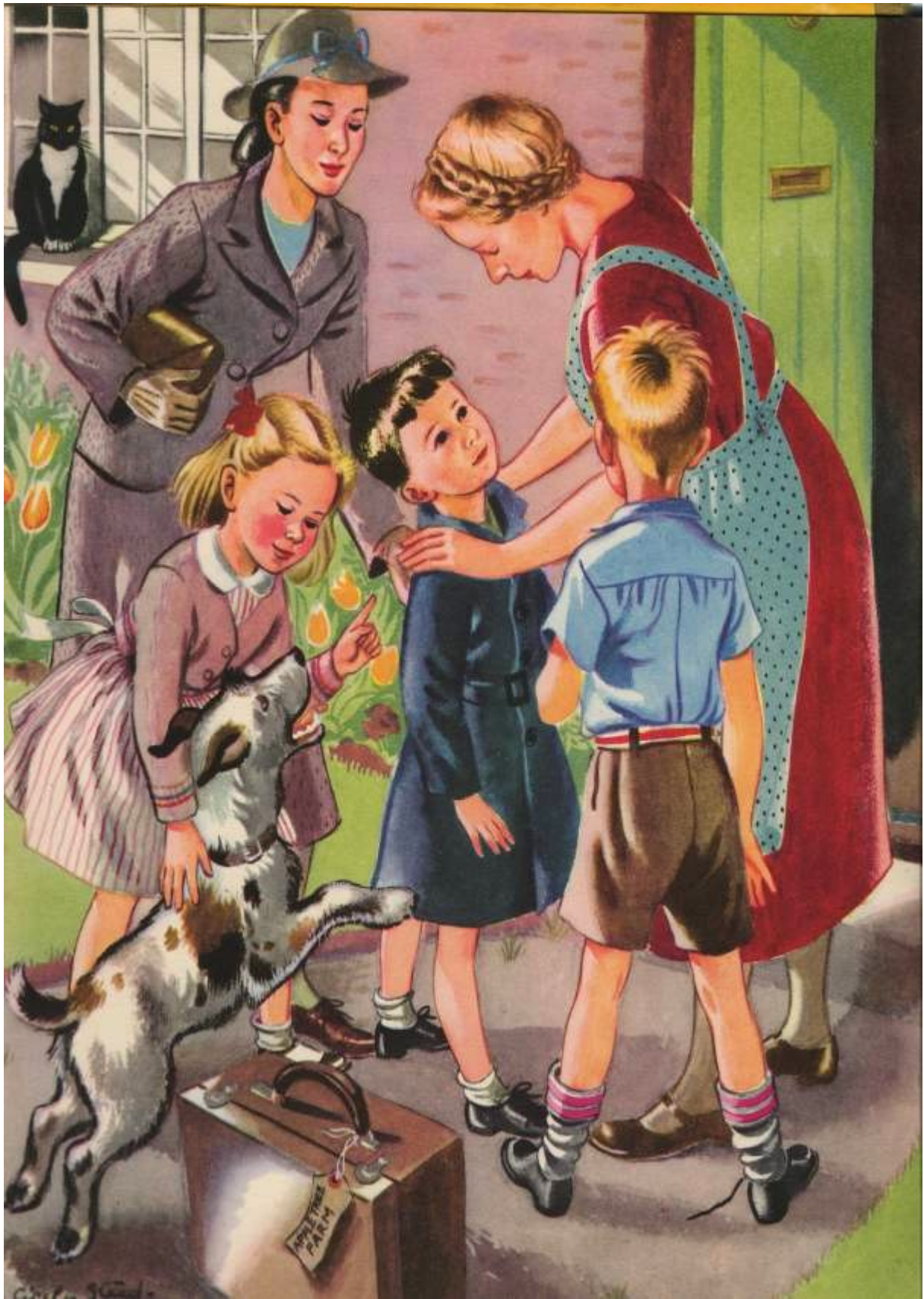
"It's like a house in my fairy-tale book," said Bobby. "What are those long buildings near it, Mummy?"

"Cow-sheds for the cows, barns for storing all kinds of things, henhouses," said Mummy. "Oh, Bobby—how I *wish* I could stay here with you. A farm life is so lovely. You will get to know hundreds of animals, and I'm sure you will love them all."

"I shan't love cows," said Bobby. "I don't like their horns."

'You wait till you see the lovely creamy milk the cows give you each day for





your breakfast, and the golden butter for your bread," said Mummy.

The bus came to a stop. "We get out here," said Mummy, and she jumped down and helped Bobby. She took his bag and they walked down a lane that was white with may blossom.

At the end of the lane was the farm—and there were Bobby's two cousins running to meet them! What bonny, rosy-faced children they were! Peter was seven, and Jenny was six:, just as old as Bobby.



"Bobby! You've come!" shouted Peter. "We've been watching for you all the morning."

Then up the path to the lovely old farmhouse they went. Peter's mother came out, smiling.

"Bobby—this is your Auntie Susan," said Mummy. Bobby liked her. She was nice and plump and smiley, and her eyes were as blue as the sky.

"Welcome to Apple-Tree Farm," she said, and kissed Bobby. A dog came up barking, and a cow suddenly mooed in a field.

"There—that's Tinker telling you he's glad to see you, and that's Buttercup the cow saying she will give you milk for your tea!" said Auntie Susan. "Come along in, all of you!"



AT first everything on the farm seemed very strange to Bobby. He was afraid of so many things—he didn't want to go near the horses, he wouldn't look at the cows, and he was really frightened of the cackling, hissing geese.

"Mummy, isn't he funny?" said Jenny to her mother. "What *are* we to do with him?"

"Wait a day or two, and he'll soon be all right," her mother said. "Take him to see the lambs, Jenny. He will love those."

So they took him up to see Sam, the old shepherd, who had had more lambs to look after in his life than he could count!

"Well, Bobby, so you've come to see the frisky lambs, have you?" he said, when Bobby came over the grass to his hut with Jenny and Peter. "Look around you—I've twenty-three in this field—and proper little mischiefs some of them are, too!"

The lambs were scampering here and there, leaping high in the air, and frisking about like mad things. Bobby liked them. Then one lamb thought it would be naughty. It jumped right on the top of its mother's back and stood there, bleating in a high little voice.

"What's it saying?" asked Bobby, laughing.

"It's saying 'I'm the king of the castle!' " said Sam, the shepherd. "It's playing a game you play sometimes! Now see the other lambs trying to jump up and push it off!"

But when two other little lambs sprang up on to the old sheep's broad, woolly back, she was cross. She said "BAAAA" very loudly, and suddenly stood up. Off went all the naughty little lambs at once. The children laughed. "I do wish I could touch a lamb and see if it feels soft and woolly like a little toy lamb I have at home," said Bobby.

"Well, I'll call two or three over here to us," said the shepherd. 'You see, there are always a few lambs each year whose mothers won't bother with them-so I have to give them milk out of a baby's bottle, and they get very tame. They'll always come when I call."



He called loudly. "Snowy, Snowy, Snowy! Sooty, Sooty, Sooty! Frisky, Frisky, Frisky!" And what *do* you think? Three tiny lambs came racing over to the shepherd at once, their tails wriggling behind them.

"This is Snowy, because he's all white," said Jenny. "And this is Sooty, because he has a black face."

"And this is Frisky,



because he never keeps still," said Peter, cuddling the third lamb.

Bobby put out his hand to Snowy. The lamb sniffed at it, and then suddenly put its front feet up on Bobby's shoulders! It rubbed noses with him. "Oh, look—it wants to be friends with me!" shouted Bobby in delight. He stroked its soft fur. "It's *so* soft and woolly. I do love it."

All three children cuddled the little lambs. Other lambs came round and watched, but they were not as tame as Snowy, Sooty and Frisky. "What a warm coat it has," said Bobby, still hugging his lamb. "I wish I had a coat like this."

"Well, your jersey is made of lamb's wool," said the shepherd, "so you *have* got a coat like a lamb's *V*'

"And your socks are wool, too," said Jenny. "And Sam's scarf— isn't it, Sam?"

"That's right, Missy," said Sam. He gave the lambs a little tap on their backs. "Now, off you go, you rascals!" he said. "Go and play 'Touch me last' and 'King of the Castle' again." And off went the lambs, hoppety, skippety. When the children ran out of the field they went hoppety, skippety, too, and that made old Sam laugh!





NOW come and see the hens and the ducks, and all their little ones," said Jenny. "You'll like them."

"Will the hens peck me?" asked Bobby.

"Of course not—unless, of course, you are unkind to them or their chicks," said Jenny. "But you won't be unkind, Bobby."

"No, I won't," said Bobby. "I know I shall like the chicks, Jenny. Do you think I can hold one?"

"If the mother-hen will let you," said Jenny. "But I expect she will see you're a kind boy, and she won't mind if you pick up a chick."

The three children went into the farmyard. What a busy place it was! Two horses came in with carts. A big tabby cat sat washing itself in the sun. One of the farm dogs ran round, sniffing here and there. And everywhere there were hens and chicks! How they ran about! The hens clucked loudly.

"They are telling their chicks to be careful not to go too near the horses," said Peter. "They might get trodden on. Which do you like best, Bobby—the tiny yellow chicks, the black ones, or the ones that are half yellow and half black?"

"Oh, the yellow ones," said Bobby. "They are just like the toy chicks I had in my Easter egg this year."



He sat down on a hen-coop and let the tiny chicks run round his feet. Then he picked one up and put it against his neck. He smiled joyfully. "Oh, it feels lovely," he said. "And it's trying to peck me with its tiny beak. And listen to its little voice! It's cheep-cheep-cheeping." A hen came by with a crowd of tiny ducklings after her, waddling quickly to keep up with her. Bobby stared in surprise. "Look," he said, "there's a hen with ducklings instead of chicks, Jenny. Where did she get them from?"

"Well, hens are better mothers than ducks," said Jenny, "so sometimes we put ducks' eggs under a hen-mother for her to sit on them and hatch them out. She doesn't know they are ducks' eggs, of course. She doesn't even mind when ducklings come out of them instead of chicks!"

"Look, Jenny," said Peter suddenly, "three of those ducklings are waddling over to the duck-pond—do look. The mother-hen will be so cross with them!"

Sure enough, the tiny ducklings had seen the water. Lovely water! They saw the big white ducks swimming there, and they suddenly knew that they, too, were ducks, and not chicks as the mother-hen thought them. And off waddled three of the ducklings to the pond!



The mother-hen saw them and clucked loudly and crossly to them.

"Cluck-cluck-cluck! Come back, come back! You must not wet your feet in water. Come back, cluck-cluck-cluck!"

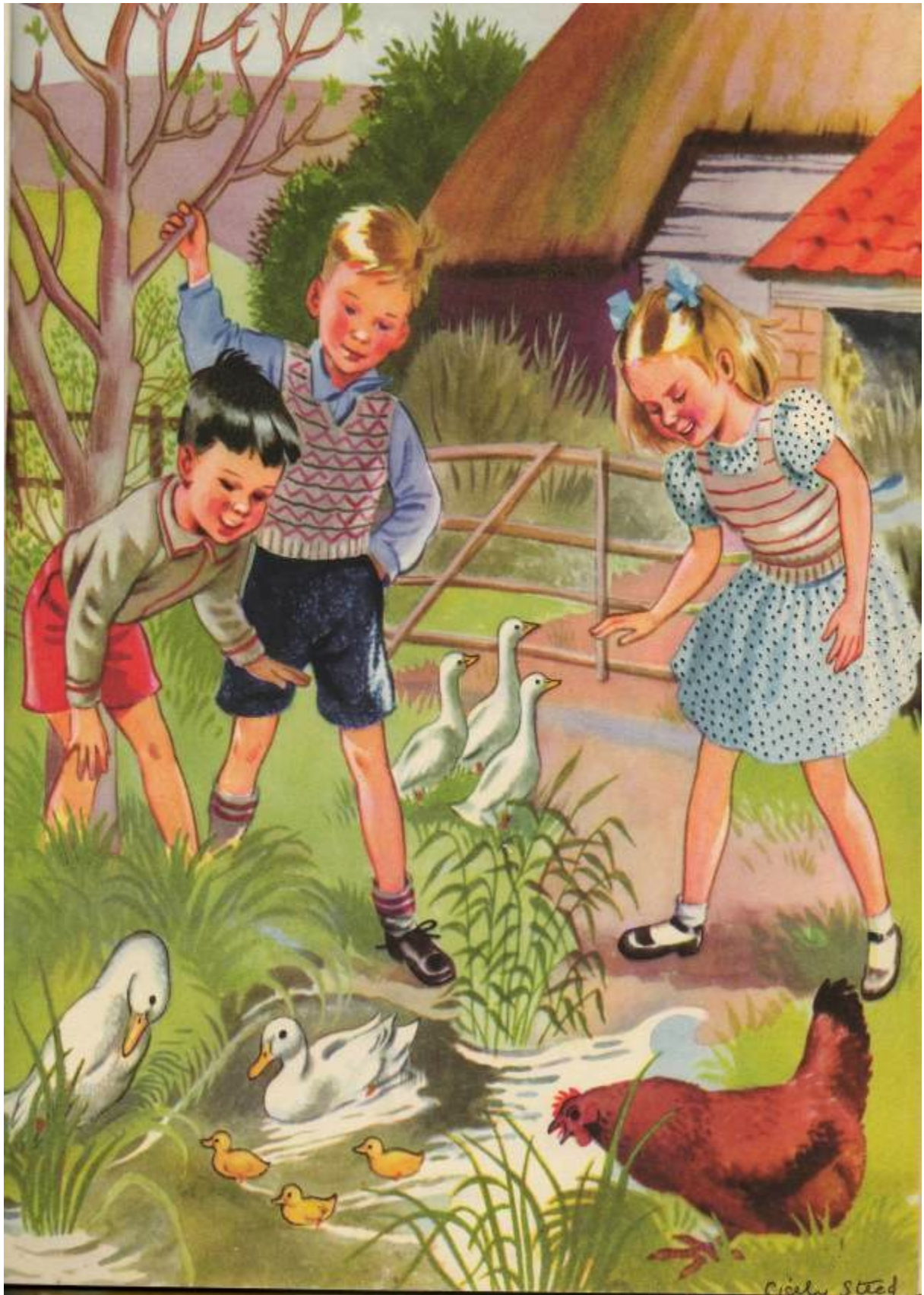
But the three little ducklings so badly wanted to paddle that they wouldn't do what they were told. One reached the pond and in he went, splash! Then the other two went in, and, oh, what a surprise for them—they found that they could bob about on the water just like the big white ducks!

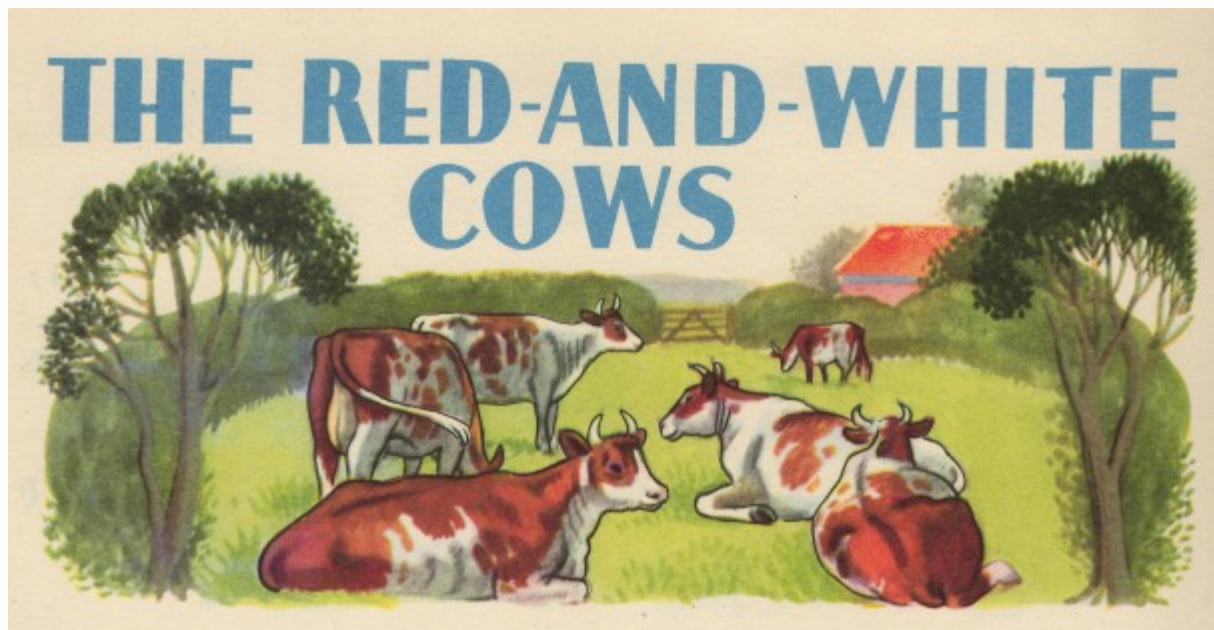
"Quack-quack!" said the big ducks, swimming up. "So you have found that you are ducklings at last! You thought you were chicks, didn't you? But you will grow into ducks like us. Quack-quack-quack!"

"CLUCK-CLUCK-CLUCK!" squawked the poor mother-hen, running up and down the bank of the pond. "Come back!" The three children laughed. "Poor henny-penny!" called Jenny. "Don't worry—they're ducklings, though you thought they were chicks."

"Cluck-cluck," said another mother-hen nearby. She had a crowd of baby chicks with her. "See what happens when you bring up ducklings instead of chicks. *My* babies will never behave like that!"







Come and see the cows in the field, Bobby," said Peter next day. "We've got seventeen, and I know all their names."

"No, thank you," said Bobby. "I still don't like their horns. They might toss me."

"It's bulls that run at people and toss them," said Jenny. "We haven't a bull. Come and help us to get the cows in for milking, Bobby. Please do!"

"Well, you walk in front of me then," said Bobby. So Jenny and Peter walked in front of him into the big buttercup field, and Bobby followed behind, feeling rather afraid.

But he needn't have been afraid of the pretty red-and-white cows. They stood there among the buttercups, looking round with big, quiet eyes, swishing their long tails to and fro over their backs.

"That's Clover—and this one's Buttercup—and that one over there is Daisy—and this is Sorrel," began Peter. But by the time he had said six or seven names Bobby had forgotten them. He thought they were nice names for cows, though.

"It's a good thing they have such nice long tails to whisk about, isn't it?" he said to Jenny. "Look at the flies that settle on their backs



-then round comes their tail and swish-swish—the flies are all knocked away." Jenny rubbed the nose of one cow. "This is Beauty," she said. "When she was a calf she used to follow me round all day long because I sometimes gave her skim-milk out of a pail."

"Moo-oo," said the cow, just as if she remembered. She stared calmly at Jenny, swishing her tail all the time.

"Bring the cows in!" called a voice, and Jenny and Peter ran to take them in. One by one the cows made their way through the open gate, walking slowly, whisking their long tails to and fro.

"Come and see them milked," said Jenny to Bobby. "You shall have a cup of warm, creamy milk as soon as the first cow is milked, if you like."

Bobby followed. He didn't feel so afraid of the cows now. They stared so solemnly, they moved so slowly—and they didn't even seem to know that they had horns! Certainly not one of them used them. All the cows walked into the milking-shed. Each cow went to her own place. Then Aunt Susan, Jenny and Peter, and the cowman, too, began to milk them. They sat on little stools, leaned their

heads against the cows and milked each one of them, filling the big pails with frothy, foaming milk. "Do come and see if you can milk Clover," said Peter. "She stands so nice and still."

"Not today," said Bobby. "Another day I will. I don't like cows *quite* enough yet. But I soon will."

"Don't bother him," said Aunt Susan to Peter. "He'll be begging to have his own milking-stool very soon. You'll see!"

Aunt Susan was right, of course. It didn't take Bobby long before he, too, wanted to milk a cow—and he was very good indeed at it. For a reward he got a big cup of warm, creamy milk.

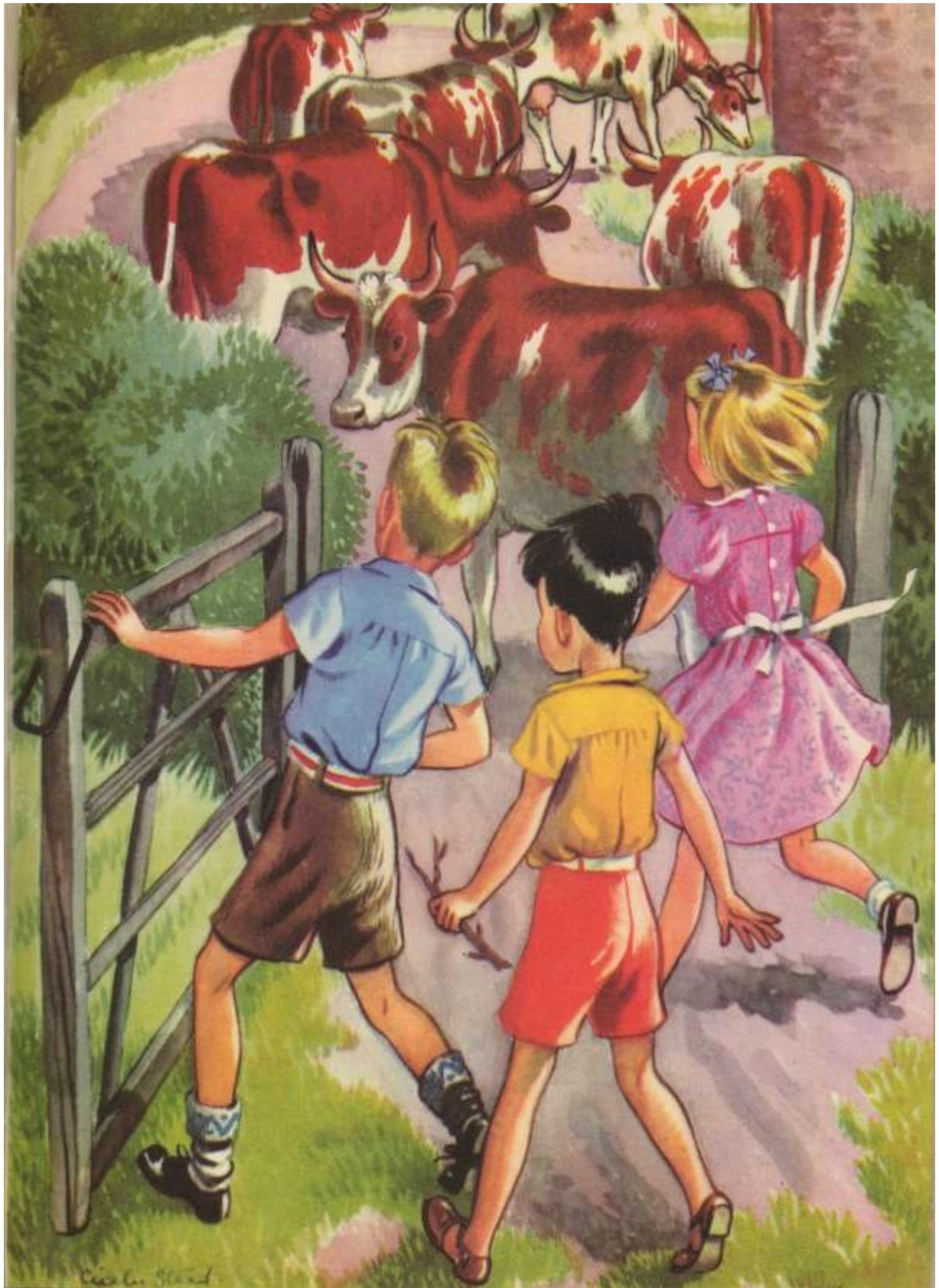
"Thank you, cow," he said, drinking it. "Thank you very much, Clover. You give lovely milk."

"Moo-oo-oo," said Clover, turning her big horned head to look at Bobby. "You are very good at milking, little boy. Moo-oo-oo!"

"I like cows now," said Bobby to his Aunt Susan. "They're kind and good. They give me milk and cream and butter and cheese. I was silly to be afraid of them."

"You were," said Aunt Susan. "What a big, brave boy you're getting, Bobby!"







ONE of the things that Bobby liked best at Apple-Tree Farm was the number of cats and dogs, puppies and kittens. There were so many.

"I shall never learn the names of all the dogs," he said. "There's the shepherd's collie dog, Captain. There's your dog, Tinker, Peter. There's your father's dog, Punch. There are the farmyard dogs, Sprig and Jo. I like them all, even the ugly old dog belonging to the cowman."

"He may be ugly, but he's very faithful and true," said Peter. "Have you seen Sprig's puppies, Bobby? Come and see them. They're sweet."

Sprig let Bobby handle her puppies gently. How he wished he could have one for his very own. As he watched them in their box with Sprig, one climbed out and walked about on wobbly legs. It suddenly gave a tiny little bark.

The children laughed. "Sprig! This little pup has grown a bark already!" said Jenny. "Did you hear it?"

The farm cats were always around, too. They got on quite well with the dogs, though Jo sometimes chased them if he thought they were after his food.



"There's Stripey," said Bobby, proud of knowing them. 'And there's Patter and Tibs. And there's Blackie. And, oh, Jenny, did you see Blackie's kittens? They are all scampering about the barn now. Once one went outside, and what do you think Blackie did?"

"What?" asked Jenny. "She went after it, picked it up by the fur at the back of its neck, and took it back into the barn," said Bobby. "I saw her carrying it, just like that."

"That's how cats always carry their kittens," said Jenny.

"Why do you have so many cats?" asked Bobby happily, putting Stripey on his knee. She curled up and went to sleep there.

"Because there are so many mice and rats on a farm," said Jenny. "And they have to be caught, or else we would never keep our corn. Our cats work hard for their living, Bobby. If you could peep into the barn at night you would see how they watch and wait for the robber-rats and mice."

"I do like being on your farm," said





Bobby, stroking Stripey. 'There are so many things to see—ducks and geese and hens and horses and cows and-

'You'll never come to an end if you try to remember all the animals and birds on a farm!' said Peter. "Even *we* don't know quite all—because calves and foals and piglets and kittens and puppies are born every week. There's always something new on a farm."

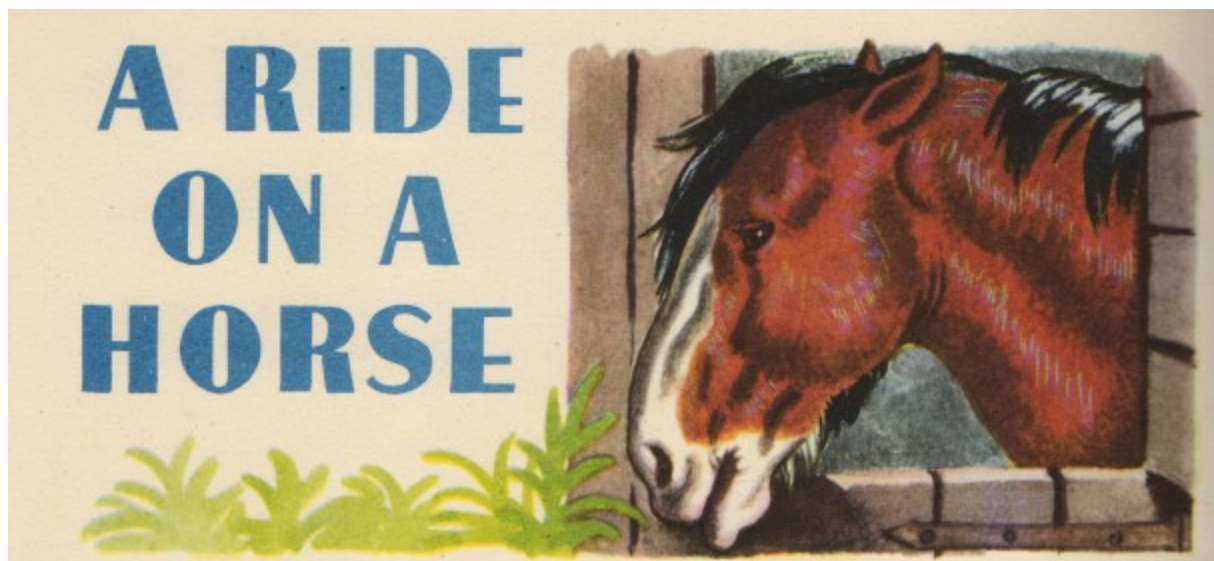
"And there's always something nice to do, too," said Bobby. "I like feeding the hens each day, and watching them scuttle round my feet. I like bringing in the cows to be milked. I like collecting the eggs that the hens and ducks have laid."

"But you *don't* like riding the horses!" said Jenny with a giggle. "You're still afraid of falling off, aren't you, Bobby? You're not a proper farmer's boy yet, like Peter."

"I'm *not* afraid of falling off," said Bobby. "I'll have a ride this very day, if you like. But your dad will have to take me, not you."

"We'll tell Dad, then," said Jenny. "And he will take you to see all the horses—and you shall choose which one you'd like to have your very first ride on! I wonder which it will be."





THE horses at Apple-Tree Farm were lovely. There were six-enormous cart-horses with long thick manes and tails, and big, shaggy hooves. Sometimes when he awoke in the early morning Bobby could hear them going out to work.

Clippity-clop, clippity-clop, went their big feet as they walked slowly through the farmyard or up the lane. It was a lovely noise.

Besides the cart-horses was a strong little pony that Uncle Jack rode. His name was Bonny. He sometimes pulled the smaller farm-carts, but he didn't like that much. He liked to be ridden all over the farm.

"In summer all the horses live out in the fields," said Jenny to Bobby. "But when it gets really cold we put them into their stables at night."

Bobby liked the stables. They smelt of horse, they were rather dark, and straw and hay were all over the place. Sometimes he pretended *he* was a horse, and went to stand in a stall, with his head over a manger of hay. He kicked with his heels on the floor, stamping like a horse.

He even neighed one day, and two of the dogs, one of the cats,

and three hens came to look in at the door to see what kind of a new horse the farmer had brought to his stable.

Once the cowman took a farm-cart up into the field where Sam, the shepherd, was. He was taking some hurdles to him. He saw Bobby and beckoned to him.

'You come and sit beside me,' he shouted. "And

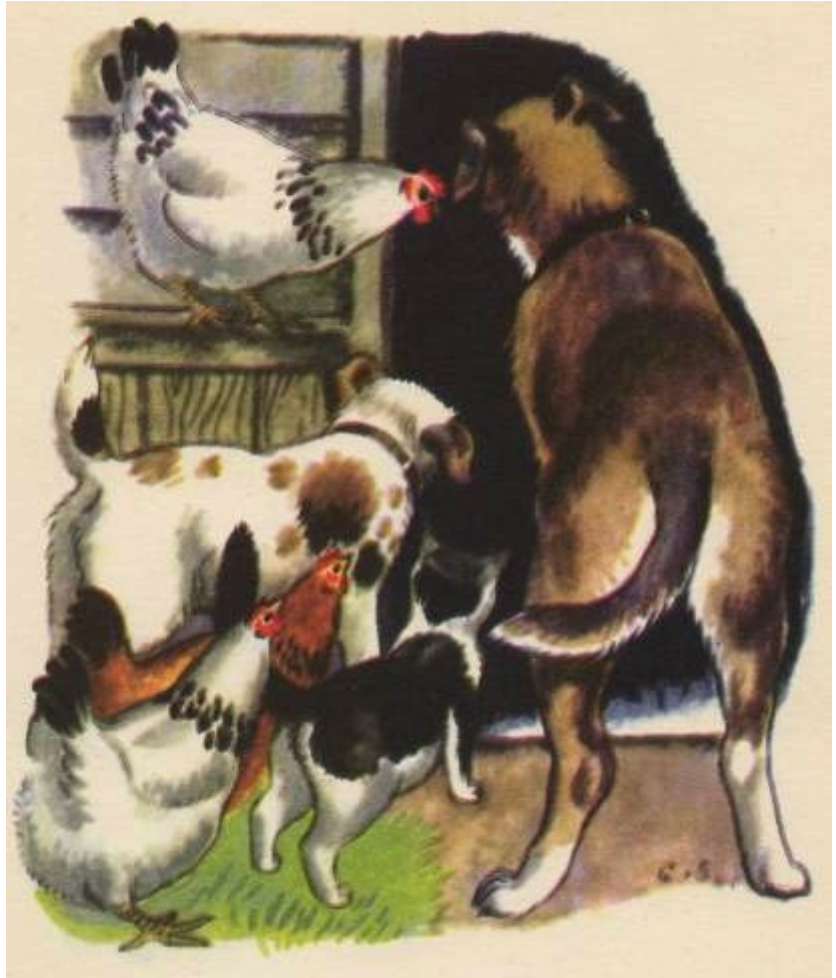
maybe I'll let you hold the reins for a bit."

Bobby thought that would be rather a grand thing to do. So he climbed up on to the cart and took his place beside the cowman. "Thank you, Jim," he said. Jim solemnly handed him the reins.

"Oh, but I don't know *how* to drive!"³ said Bobby, in alarm.

"Brownie won't mind," said Jim, with a very broad grin. "She knows the way, so she does. No matter if you pull the reins the wrong way, she'll go right. You see if she doesn't."

Well, Brownie certainly went the right way, though whether it was because Bobby did hold the reins right or not, he didn't know. Anyway, it was lovely to be high up on the



driving-seat, holding the slippery leather reins, and feeling the pull of Brownie's head as he went up the hill.

"I feel very grand," Bobby said to Jim. "I always wanted to drive a horse. I wish you'd let me do this again."

"Hop up on my cart whenever you see me coming, then," said Jim. "Old Brownie won't mind!"

It was that very evening that Bobby rode on a horse's back for the first time. He met his uncle coming down the lane, leading the great cart-horse, Clopper.

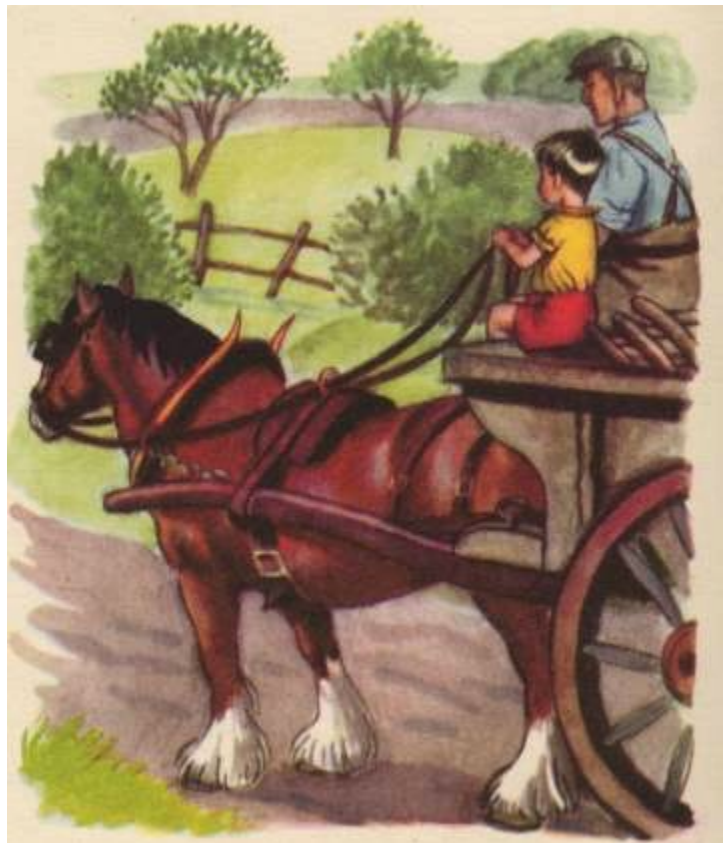
"Hey, Bobby!" called his uncle. "Come along here." And when the little boy ran up, Uncle Jack suddenly lifted him high in the air—and bump, there he was on Clopper's broad back!

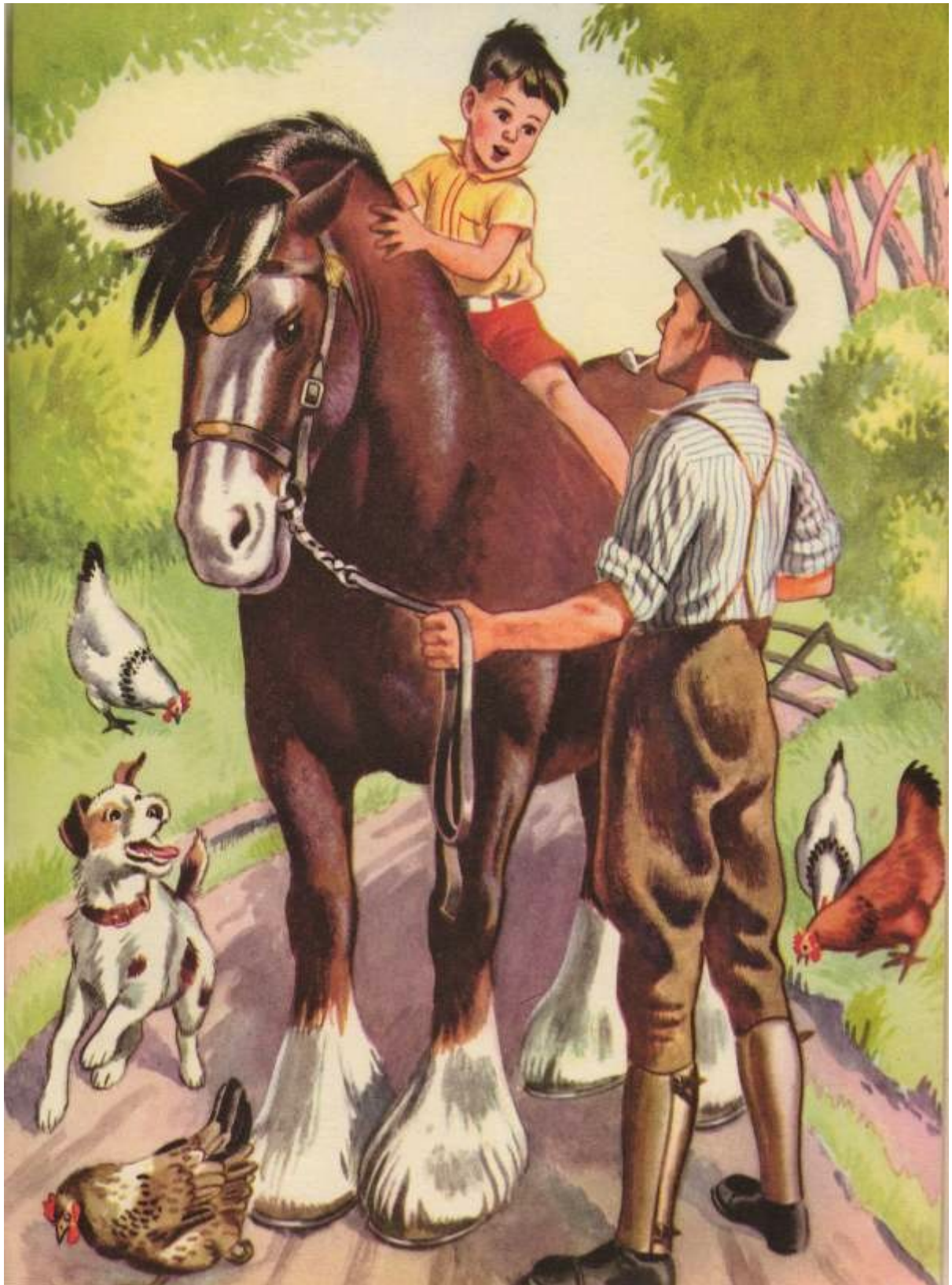
"Oooh!" said Bobby, surprised, half-frightened and excited. "Ooooh, Uncle! I'm up very high!"

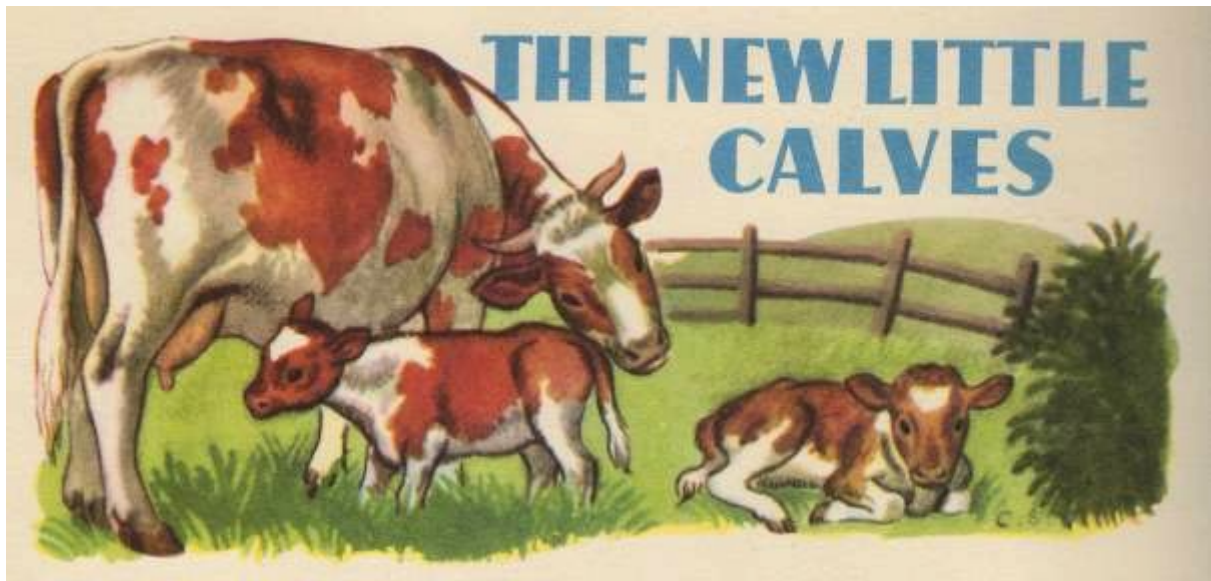
"Gee-up, Clopper, old boy," said Uncle Jack, and Clopper began walking off up the lane. Bobby almost fell off!

But somehow he hung on, bumping this way and that as Clopper plodded on. He smiled down at his uncle. "It's fine," he said. "I like it. Let go of me, Uncle. I'll stay on all right."

And when Peter and Jenny came running to meet their father, they *were* surprised to see him on Clopper's back. Bobby does have a lovely time, doesn't he!







ONE day Jenny came running to Bobby in great excitement. "Bobby! What do you think's happened? Buttercup the cow has got twin calves!"

"Twins!" said Bobby in surprise. "Oh, where are they?"

The three children went to see the new calves. They were exactly alike. Bobby stared at them in delight.

"No horns," he said. "And what long, long legs. Aren't they sweet?"

"Look," said Jenny, and she put her hand to one calf's mouth. It began to suck it at once. Bobby let the other calf suck his. It was a queer feeling. The calf looked at him out of soft brown eyes.

"You dear little thing," said Bobby. "I wish you were mine. Oh, Jenny, do you think Aunt Susan would let me look after this calf? I do love it."

"Buttercup, its mother, will look after it at first," said Jenny. "But if you like you can help to teach it to drink milk later on. I'll show you how."

The two calves grew very fast. In no time at all they were walking about on long, rather wobbly legs, and they always went to meet the three children when they saw them coming.

Then the day came when they were to be taught how to drink milk from a pail. "Come along, Bobby, and I'll show you," said Jenny.

Bobby went with her, and the two calves followed. Jenny got two pails of skim-milk from her mother, and then smiled at Bobby.

"Now, you do what I do," she said, "and we'll soon teach these calves."

"But why do they have to be taught?" asked Bobby. "Why don't we just let them drink the milk?"

"Because they don't know how to," said Jenny. "They can only suck. Drinking is different."

Bobby watched her. She put her pail down and knelt beside it.

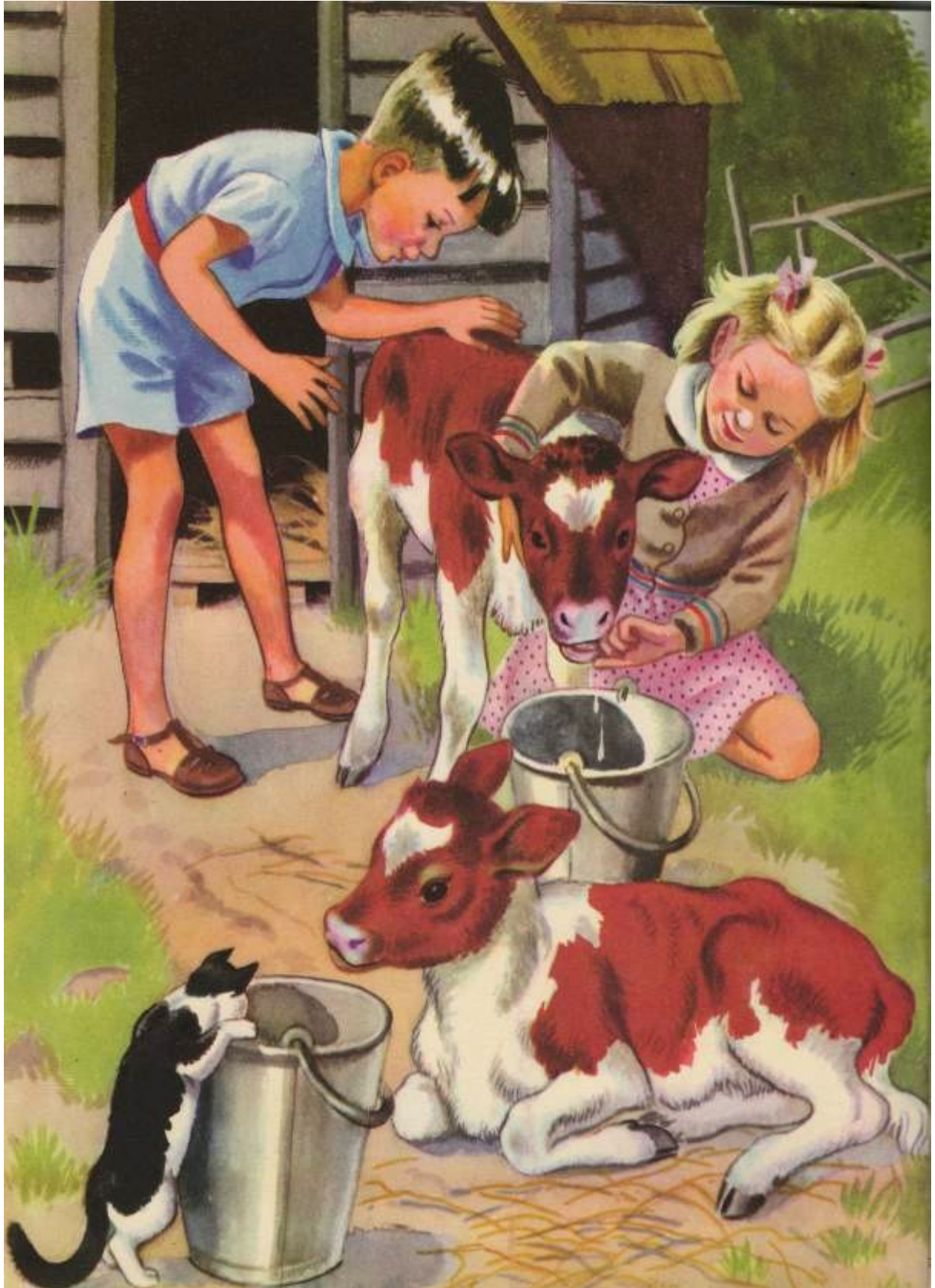
One little calf nuzzled up to her. Jenny dipped her fingers into the milk and held them out to the calf.

It sniffed the milk on them and licked them. Then it sucked



them. Jenny dipped her fingers into the milk again and the same thing happened. Then again and again the little girl dipped in her hand and the calf licked and sucked.

"Now watch, Bobby," said Jenny, "I'm gradually going to hold my hand nearer and nearer to the milk in the pail—and soon,



when the calf bends its head down to lick my fingers, it will find that my hand is touching the milk in the pail—and then I'll have my hand so close to the milk that it will be licking my fingers *and* licking the milk in the pail at the same time!"

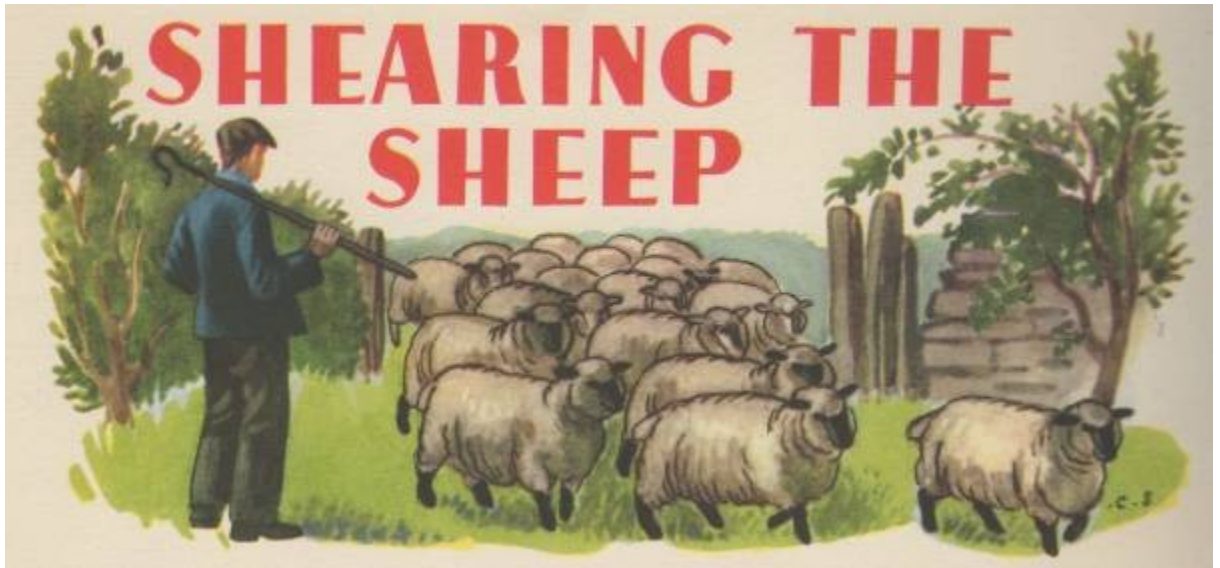
Bobby watched—and, sure enough, Jenny held her hand nearer and nearer to the milk—until at last the calf had to put its head right down into the pail to find Jenny's hand—and, dear me, where *was* her hand? It was in the milk! So in the end the calf found that it was licking up the milk in the pail—it was drinking!

"There you are," said Jenny, smiling. "I've taught him to drink already! I'll have to teach him again tomorrow and the next day, because he'll forget—but in no time at all he'll come running out when he sees me with the pail of milk, and he'll put in his head and drink the lot!"

Jenny was right, of course. It wasn't long before her little trick had taught the hungry calves to drink properly.

And now you should see them each morning when Bobby and Jenny come out with their pails. Up come the two little calves at once, and how they drink and drink and drink!





ONE morning Bobby awoke early. What could that tremendous baaing noise be? Then he remembered. "Of course—Uncle Jack said that the sheep were going to be clipped this morning!"¹ he said. "And I suppose the sheep-shearers are already here."

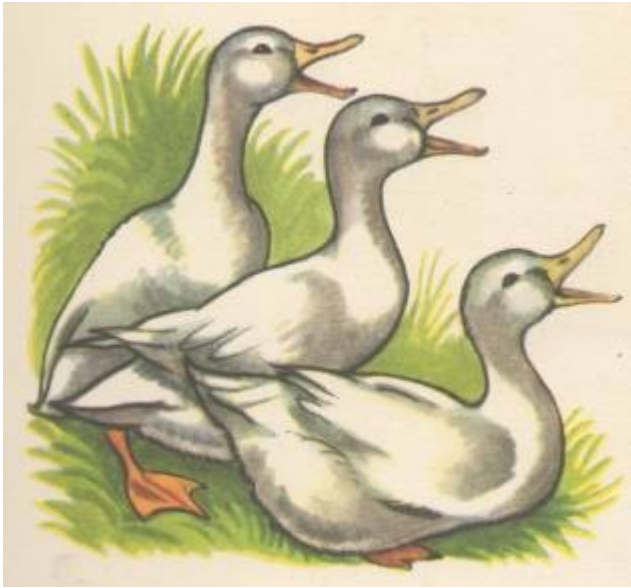
Peter called to him from the next bed. 'You're awake, Bobby! Let's get dressed and go down to watch the sheep-shearers begin.'

They dressed, called Jenny, and went down the stairs into the noisy farmyard. The baaing of the sheep had excited all the animals and birds there. The old sow was grunting in her sty. The piglets were rushing about, squealing. Hens were clucking loudly and ducks were quacking. What a to-do!

'Where are the sheep going to be sheared?' asked Bobby.

"In the shed over there," said Peter. 'The shearers always start early, because we've a lot of sheep to be sheared at Apple-Tree Farm. Come on—they've begun the shearing, I'm sure!'

Yes—the shearing had begun. The shepherd was bringing the sheep in from the hill, and they were baaing and bleating in excitement. Three of the farm dogs were running here and there very busily, working hard to keep the sheep together.



The children peeped into the shed. Three shearers sat there, and all of them were hard at work. Each had a sheep in front of him, a puzzled, astonished sheep that didn't quite know what was happening to it. Sometimes it lay on its back, sometimes on its side—it depended which part of its wool was being sheared off. 'Why do they have

to shear away all the sheep's wool?" asked Bobby. 'Well, the sheep would be far too hot in their thick, woolly coats now that the weather is getting warm," said Peter, "and also we want the wool to sell. When it's washed and weighed and sorted out and spun it will sell well, because all kinds of things can be made from it. You know that, Bobby."

'Yes," said Bobby, thinking of his woollen jersey and socks. "Fancy so many of our clothes being grown for us on the back of a sheep. Oh, look—that one's finished. How queer it looks!"¹

Hour after hour the shearers worked hard, and by the time that evening came nearly all the sheep were done. They certainly did look very queer indeed.

"I don't think I like them without their woolly coats," said Bobby. 'They look so bare and queer and cold. *Will* they feel cold, Peter?"

'Yes, at first," said Peter, "especially if the next few



days are chilly and windy. But they soon get used to it, and their coats grow again, you know. By the time the end of the summer comes they will have fine new coats!"

"Oh, look—the shearers have forgotten to cut off the lambs' coats!" said Bobby suddenly. "Shall I go and tell them?"

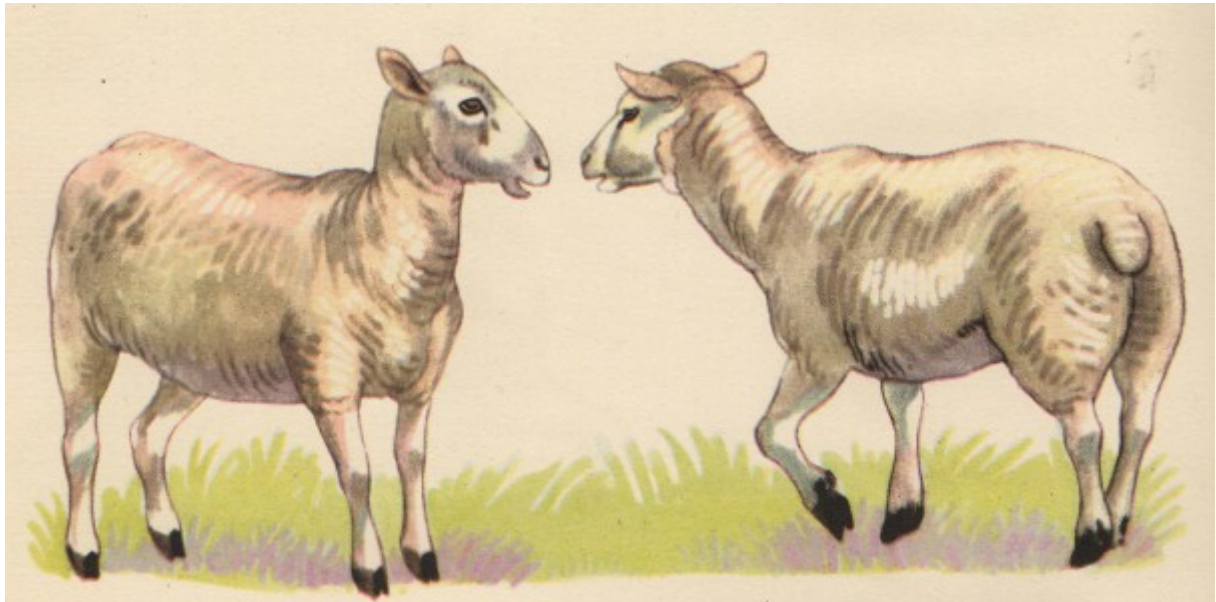
Peter and Jenny laughed and laughed.

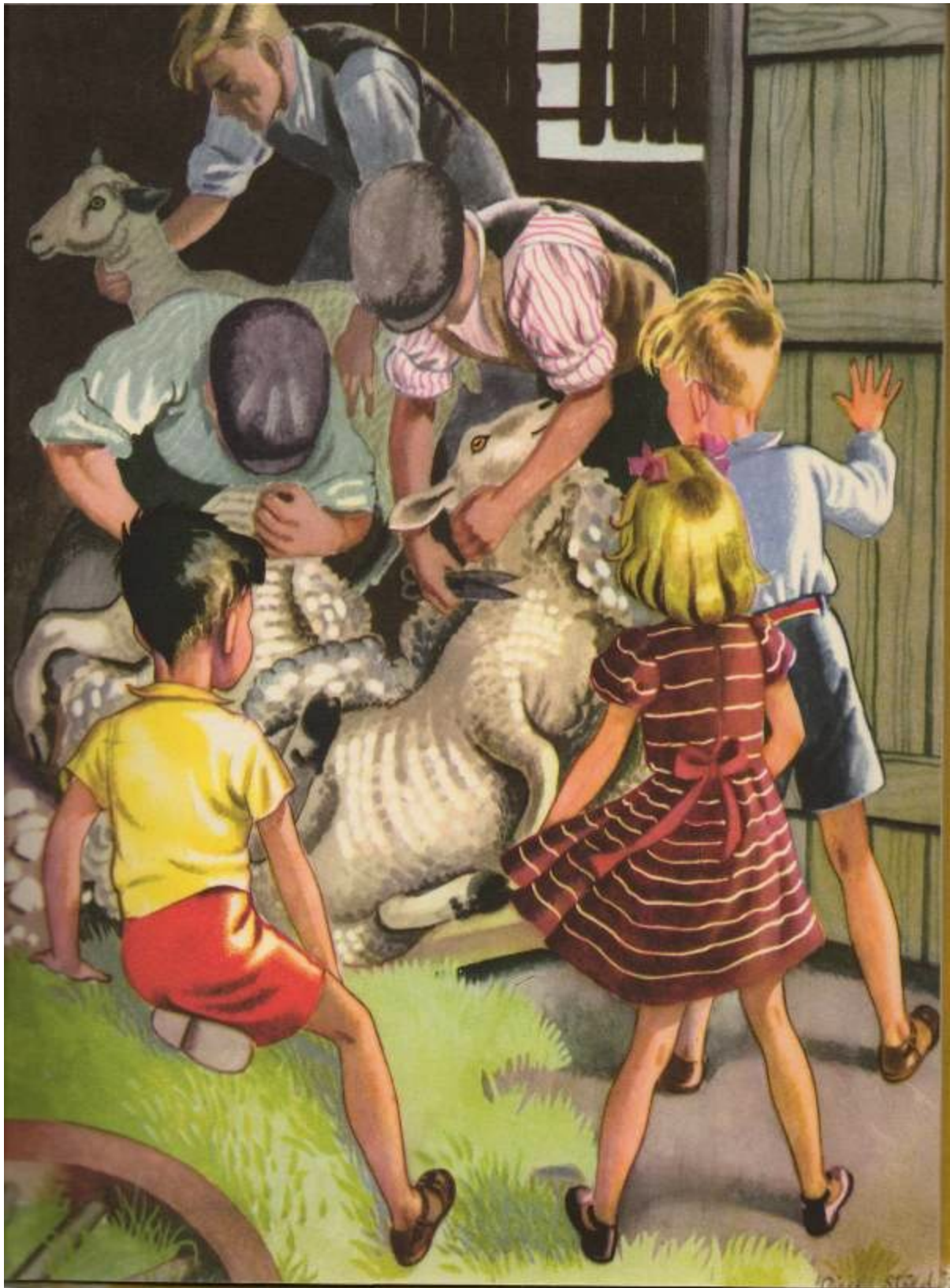
"Oh *no*, Bobby!" said Jenny. "The shearers would think you were joking. Little lambs are always allowed to keep their warm coats the first year. They would feel the cold too much, you see."

"Oh," said Bobby. "Well, I'm very pleased they keep *their* coats. If they didn't, and the nights were cold, I'd simply *have* to take out some rugs to cover them up, poor things!"¹

And that made Jenny and Peter laugh all the more!

Still, they were all very glad indeed that the weather was nice and warm—the sheep wouldn't miss their warm woolly coats *quite* so much!







BOBBY, will you go and tell Jenny and Peter it's time for tea' called Auntie Susan. Bobby was playing with puppies and kittens all mixed up together, and having a lovely time.

'Yes, I'll go, Auntie," said Bobby, getting up. "Where are they r'

"They are up in the orchard," said Auntie Susan.

"Oh dear," said Bobby. "Must I go?"

'Why not, dear?" said Auntie Susan in surprise.

"Well, you see," said Bobby, "I shall have to pass where the geese live, and I shall have to go near the turkeys—and I don't like going near the three goats in the orchard either."

'Well!" said Auntie Susan, most surprised. "Well, well, well-I didn't know you were such a little silly, after all this time you've been at Apple-Tree Farm! I just can't believe it."

Bobby was very red in the face. "I'll go, Auntie," he said. "I'll go the long way round. Then I shan't be hissed at by the geese, or gobbled at by the turkeys, or butted by the goats."

"Now, listen, Bobby," said Aunt Susan, "you just face up to them all! Once you've done that you'll never be afraid of them again. Do you mean to tell me you're one of the people that can't say BO to a goose?"

Well—if I said BO to a goose what would it do?" asked Bobby.

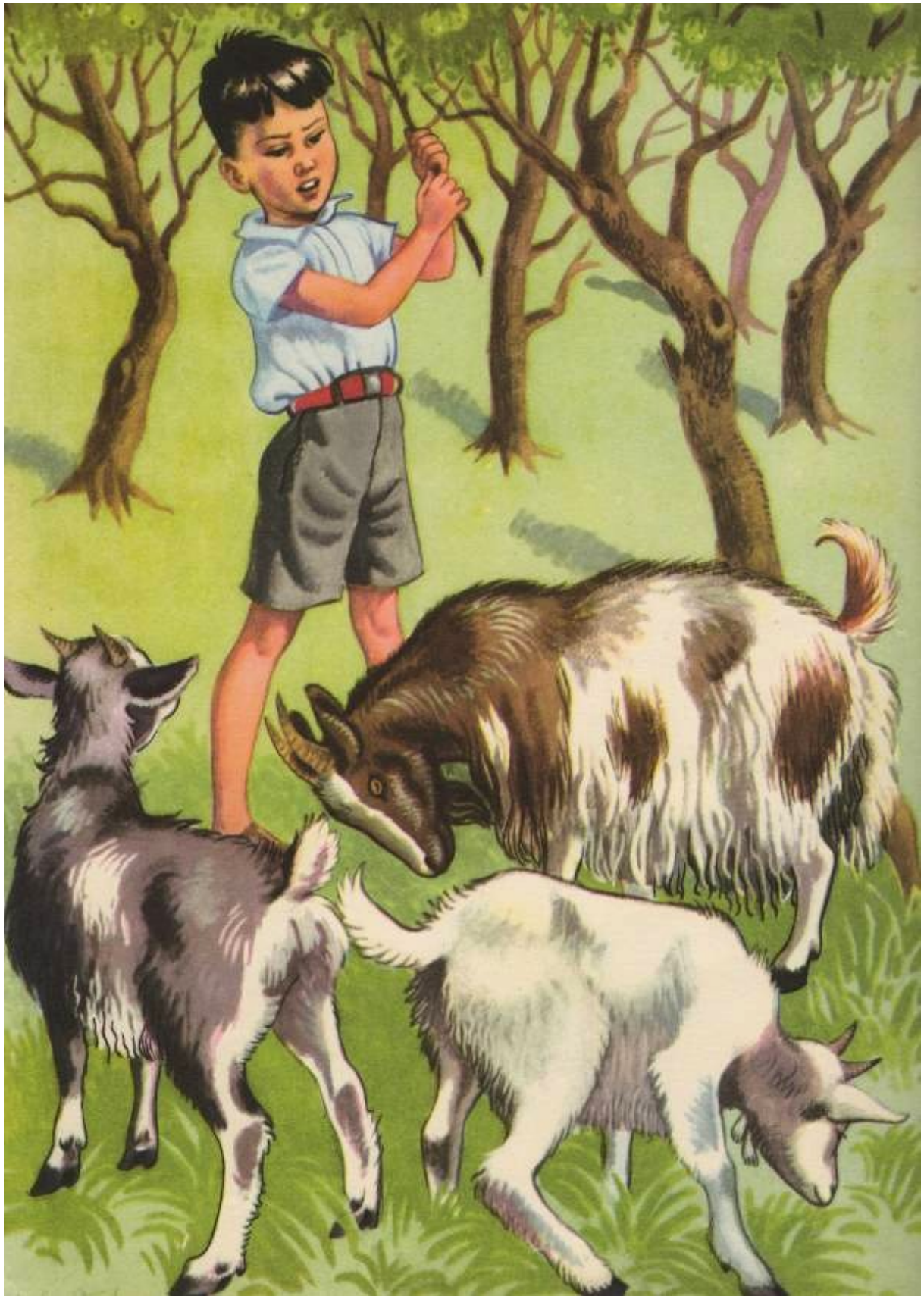
"It would turn round and waddle away quickly," said Auntie Susan. "As for the turkeys, they don't make a gobbling noise because they want to gobble you—it's just their way of talking to one another. And no goat will butt you if you face it, waggle a little stick at it, and say, 'Now then, goat, behave yourself!'

"Then I'll go," said Bobby. "I'm not really a silly, Auntie. If you stay here and listen you'll hear me saying BO very loudly indeed!"³

He went off, whistling loudly. He broke a small stick from the hedge. He did hope Auntie Susan was right in what she had said. He came to the geese. They were very very big birds, and they cackled as well as hissed. One big goose came stepping towards him, hissing very fiercely indeed.

Bobby stood still. "BO!" he shouted. "BO, BO, BO!" The goose stopped in surprise. Then it turned round and waddled away, still cackling—and all the others followed it.





"Good," said Bobby, pleased. "I'm glad I know how to BO to a goose. Ah—here are the turkeys—what a horrid gobbling noise they make!"

So they did, but when Bobby looked at them closely he saw that his aunt was right—they were really only talking to one another. They weren't saying that they wanted to gobble him up!

They never even looked at him when he went by! And now here were the three goats. *They* were looking at him all right. Two of them came towards him, and one lowered its head.

Bobby spoke loudly and fiercely, wagging his little stick. "Goats, behave yourselves! Do you hear me! Don't you see my stick?"

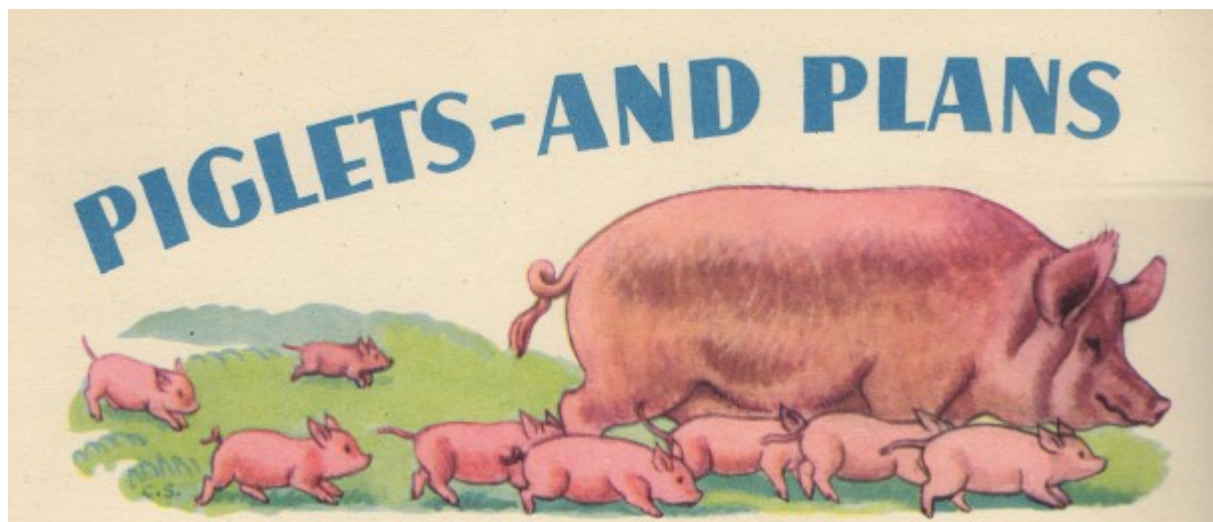
The goats looked at him, and then capered off without even bleating. Bobby felt rather grand and very brave indeed.

He heard a shout of laughter and saw Jenny and Peter peeping through the hedge at him.

"We saw you! We heard you! You did look funny, Bobby. *We* wouldn't have been afraid of you."

"BO, BO, BO!" shouted Bobby, and wagged his stick at them—and how they ran, almost falling over with laughter!





"Rrrrumph, rrrrumph!" said the old mother-pig as she rubbed her snout in the straw, trying to find a tit-bit. "Rrrrumph!"

"I like the way you grunt," said Bobby, sitting on the wall of the sty. "And I like all your piglets, too, old sow. They are so pink and neat. What a lot of children you've got!"

"Rrrrumph!" said the mother-pig and looked at Bobby out of small, sharp eyes. The little piglets scrambled round her, crying "Eee, eee, eee!" all the time.

Bobby bounced his ball up and down on the wall, watching the piglets. He wished he could have one for his own. It wouldn't be very cuddlesome, but it would be fun seeing it scamper about all day long. The ball bounced off the wall into the sty. At once all the piglets made a rush for it.

"Oh no—don't nibble it," cried Bobby in alarm, and he jumped down into the sty. He bent down to get his ball, pushing away the excited piglets.

And then, dear me, what a shock he got! The mother-pig rushed at him and knocked him right over! Bump! He sat down in a hurry—and he got up again in a hurry, too, because he could see that the big sow was going to knock him over again if she could.



Bobby rushed for the wall, and just got on the top of it in time. "I wasn't hurting your piglets!" he cried. "I was only getting my ball!"

"Rrrrumph!" said the sow crossly. Auntie Susan came by, and how she laughed!

"How do you stop a pig from knocking you over?" asked Bobby, rubbing himself.

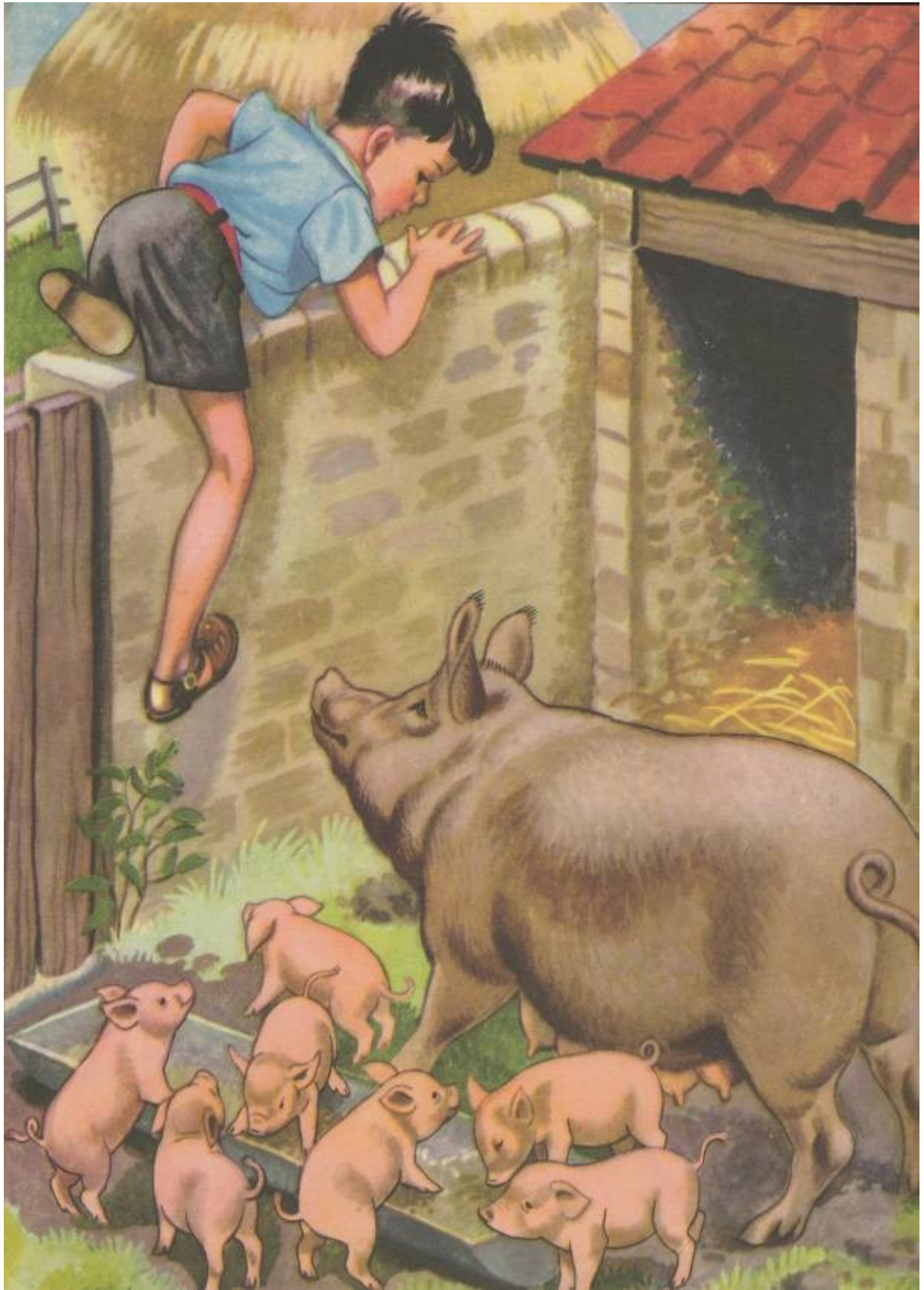
'You just don't go into her sty, that's all," said Auntie Susan. "Come and help me feed the hens, Bobby."

Soon they were scattering corn for the hungry hens and chicks. It was a lovely evening, and all kinds of nice country sounds came on the air. Cows mooed, and a horse whinnied from the field. A dog barked, and from the orchard came

the sound of the cackling of the geese. Then Jenny and Peter came running up and flung their arms round their mother. "Hallo, Mummy!" they said. "Isn't it a lovely evening?"

It certainly was. The four of them stood looking round, seeing the farmhouse windows going golden in the setting sun, and the duck-pond gleaming gold, too.





"This is a lovely place," said Bobby suddenly. "And there are lots more lovely things to come: hay-making—and reaping the corn—and picking the fruit."

"And taking honey from the hive, and making jam," said Jenny.

"And riding home in the hay-wagon on the top of the hay," said Peter. "That's what *I* like doing best."

"I'm not going to live in a town when I'm grown-up," said Bobby suddenly. "I've just made up my mind—I'm going to be a farmer, and have a farm of my own—*just* like Apple-Tree Farm!"

"How funny—so are we!" said Jenny. "Aren't we, Peter?"

Peter nodded. "Yes, we are. And if Bobby really means it, shall we let him share our farm when we're grown-up, too? Then we'd all be together."

"Yes, oh yes!" cried Bobby. "I'll have a farm with you, and I'll work so hard, just as hard as your father does, Peter. What shall we call our farm?"

"We'll have to think," said Jenny.

Isn't it a lovely idea? I wouldn't mind sharing a farm with them, too, would you?





Enid Blyton





DOWN ^{at} the FARM

with Enid Blyton



Illustrations by **CICELY STEED**